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LETTER DATED 11 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF ITALY AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith a Joint Declaration, issued in Rome on 10 February 1998, by the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, and the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, Romano Prodi, on the situation in Iraq (see annex).

We would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mr. F. Paolo FULCI
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of
Italy to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Sergey V. LAVROV
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of
the Russian Federation to the
United Nations

Annex

Joint Declaration by the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, issued in Rome on 10 February 1998

The situation with regard to Iraq is becoming increasingly tense. At the same time, as a result of the political efforts of many States, there are indications that it may be possible to resolve the crisis by diplomatic means.

The international community is naturally interested in the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and this requires that inspections be carried out throughout Iraqi territory and that Iraq comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Iraqi leadership must realize that it is responsible for the situation that has arisen and act in a constructive manner.

Diplomatic efforts to defuse this dangerous crisis must be intensified in order to avoid military action, which could have unforeseen consequences.

There is reason to believe that the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, can play a coordinating role in resolving the issue of how to end the current crisis. In these circumstances, it is of crucial importance that he travel to Baghdad.

(Signed) Romano PRODI
President of the Council
of Ministers of the Republic of Italy

(Signed) Boris YELTSIN
President of the Russian Federation